11-4-93 C.T.

ELECTIONS

Amendment 2 strategy tilts elections in other states

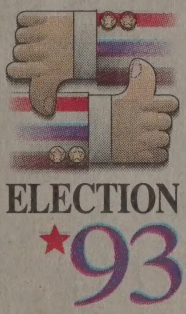
'Special rights' slogan aids repeal of gay rights laws

By **Angela Dire**
Gazette Telegraph

Gay rights activists and their opponents could agree on one thing Wednesday: The momentum for what happened in the voting booths of Ohio, Maine and New Hampshire began in Colorado.

In a setback for the gay rights movement, voters in Cincinnati and Lewiston, Maine, repealed anti-discrimination laws that protected homosexuals while residents in Portsmouth, N.H., took a symbolic stand against extending civil rights to gays.

It's been one year since Colorado passed Amendment 2, which would ban laws that protect gays from discrimination based on their sexual orientation.



But the echo of Colorado's vote, in which the measure passed by a vote of 52 to 48 percent, came back as a roar. Lewiston's anti-gay rights measure passed by a much larger margin — 2-1. And in Cincinnati, a crushing 62 percent of voters favored wiping from the books a 1992 law that prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation.

In all three cities, anti-gay rights activists borrowed many of the strategies that helped persuade Colorado voters to adopt Amendment 2

See **GAYS**/A3

pearing confident in his growing strength, Russian President Boris Yeltsin backed away Wednesday from a pledge to hold an early presidential election in June and told regional leaders they must accept reduced powers./**A10**

▶ **VIDEO OF ABDUCTION SHOWN:** A fuzzy videotape of two boys leading a 2-year-old boy away from a Liverpool, England, shopping mall was shown Wednesday in the trial of two youngsters charged in the abduction and murder of James Bulger./**A13**

CITY/REGION

▶ **TWO ARRESTED AFTER TRAFFIC SPAT:** Two men involved in a traffic altercation were arrested after police discovered the men were wanted on outstanding warrants. A later search of the car turned up suspected cocaine./**B3**

STATE

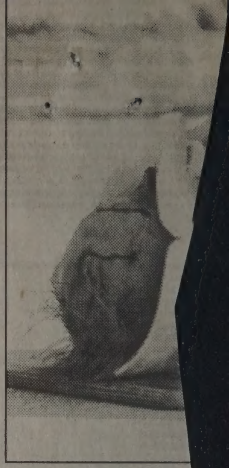
▶ **GRAZING FEE COMPROMISE FIZZLES:** On Sunday, Sens. Hank Brown and Ben Nighthorse Campbell appeared close to a compromise with Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt on the grazing fee issue. But now Babbitt has backed away from of the compromise./**B3**

OPINION

▶ **ELECTION RESULTS:** Democratic conventional wisdom was cut to shreds by the voters of New Jersey, Virginia and New York City, who underlined new truths on Tuesday, writes columnist Robert D. Novak./**B5**

SPORTS

▶ **A SPECIAL INVITATION:** When morning meetings broke up Wednesday, each player on the Broncos' punt- and kickoff-coverage teams found an invitation in their lockers at Broncos Centre. It said, "You are invited to eliminate No. 21, Eric Metcalf of the Cleveland Browns, on Nov. 7, 1993, at Cleveland Stadium."/**C1**



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LOCAL FORECAST

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Gays/Legal fight pledged

From A1

— particularly the theme of "No special rights."

"Obviously, it's a strategy that resonates with a lot of the voting populous — even in big-city urban areas," said Tony Marco, a co-founder and former member of Colorado for Family Values, the Colorado Springs group that drafted Amendment 2.

Colorado forces had the most influence in Cincinnati. Colorado for Family Values donated at least $75,000 to the repeal effort in the Ohio city of 340,000.

"Part of our mission statement is to be a resource to other states and communities who are working on this issue," said Will Perkins, spokesman for the group.

More than that, Colorado for Family Values lent its effective campaign slogan: The Cincinnati group called itself the "Equal Rights, Not Special Rights Campaign." The municipal amendment placed before Cincinnati voters was nearly identical to Amendment 2. But unlike the Colorado measure, the Cincinnati one did not use the specific word "discrimination."

"The claim of discrimination is what they removed because they knew that one would get shot down," said Scott Greenwood, legal counsel for "Equality Cincinnati," the group that unsuccessfully fought the repeal. "Special rights is a big lie, but it's been used effectively now in several different places."

In Cincinnati, as in Colorado, voters can expect a constitutional challenge to their newly enacted measure. Opponents of the Cincinnati measure plan to borrow a lot of the same strategies that Colorado activists are using to fight Amendment 2 in court.

"We will be bringing virtually the same constitutional challenge brought in Colorado," said Greenwood, who also works for the American Civil Liberties Union.

Cincinnati activists may even use in their legal battle a Colorado Supreme Court opinion that Amendment 2 is probably unconstitutional. The law's constitutionality is currently being reviewed by a Denver judge, but is expected to ultimately be debated in higher courts.

In July, the state's highest court upheld an injuction that has kept Amendment 2 from becoming law.

This week, the U.S. Supreme Court refused without comment to get involved in Amendment 2. So the Colorado Supreme Court is still the highest authority to address a measure like Amendment 2, said Suzanne Goldberg, an attorney with Lambda Legal Defense Fund, a New York gay rights organization.

"There's no question the Colorado Supreme Court's ruling will be looked to in the litigation in Cincinnati," she said.

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